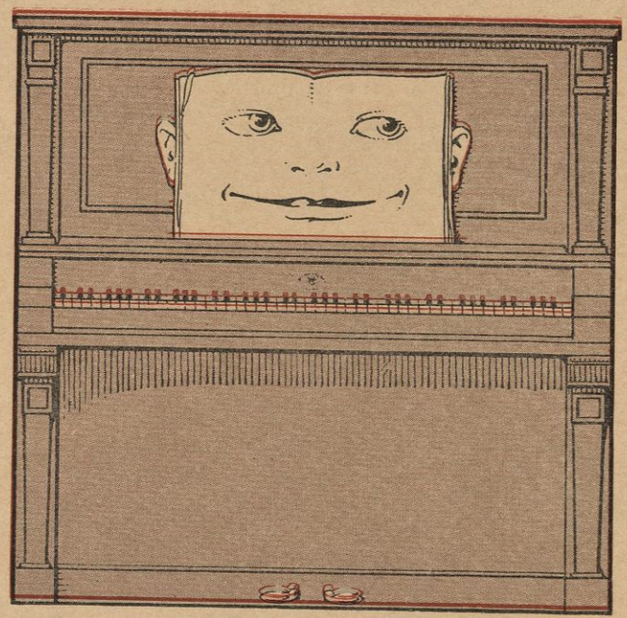
A First
-HOW-DO-YOU-DO-
To Staff and Keyboard



By
Dorothy Gaynor Blake

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A FIRST HOW-DO-YOU-DO

TO STAFF AND KEYBOARD

Music, Text, and Illustrations by

DOROTHY GAYNOR BLAKE

BOSTON: OLIVER DITSON COMPANY

NEW YORK: CHAS. H. DITSON & CO. CHICAGO: LYON & HEALY

LONDON: WINTHROP ROGERS, LTD.

MADE IN U. S. A.

FOREWORD

IN the course of one's teaching experience new problems are constantly appearing. Every child is a new personality with a fresh outlook on what seems old material and so, although there has been much written for beginners, there are always new ways of presenting things. And because some which I have used seemed appealing to the particular pupils for whom they were devised, I have written them into this little book. I refer particularly to the melodies treating of the scale relationship, the movable keynote, the key-names on keyboard and staff, the introduction of sharps and flats in key-signature, the triplets, the dots, precision of finger technic and the differentiation between the major and minor modes and their respective moods. These are some of the many things the beginner has to learn, and I find that his mind and sense of humor are more keenly alive to them than to the appeal of the more fanciful subjects. Not that these should be neglected, for they have their imaginative and interpretative value; but the child undoubtedly enjoys that upon which he is intent; and it is well to make amusing the driving home of some of these old and very necessary bits of information.

In presenting many of the little pieces there will be found repetitions of a figure in the same or the other hand; or sequences which are so helpful in memorizing. Also there are introduced very early the simple chord

combinations which the child enjoys using and which are so easily grasped and analyzed if there is presented, simultaneously with the keyboard instruction, the work outlined in Mrs. Blanche Dingley-Mathews *Conversation Lessons for the Beginner in Music.*

I advise having the child memorize from the start, write out the melodies on blackboard or paper, and transpose them into all feasible keys. The details of which keys to use, etc., must be left to the discretion of the teacher; but such work should be begun at once as it forms an invaluable part of the fundamental training.

I have purposely put much material into this book not carrying the difficulty very far, because with so many new things to learn, it is well for the student not to be bothered too much with the working of his hands. If he progresses easily and rapidly, so much the better; and he can with a good foundation and proportionately greater ease meet the coming difficulties.

Because there are so many ways of teaching and so many splendid textbooks for teachers, I have not attempted to make this a pedagogical guide. In Jessie L. Gaynor's *Method* and *Elements of Musical Expression*, and Blanche Dingley-Mathews *Conversation Lessons for the Beginner in Music* and *Class Lessons in Music*, the teacher will find such wealth of suggestion as to solve any problems of presentation or pedagogy. I have tried only to furnish material, childlike in melody and conception, rich enough harmonically to keep even the first grader musically abreast of his time, and which will be compatible with the methods worked out by our best teachers.

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To Staff and Keyboard

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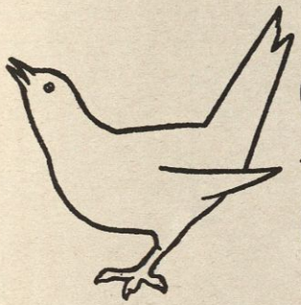
The Birds

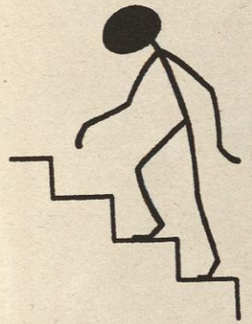


1

When they twit - ter in the sun, We know at last that spring has come.

The immediate transposition of Nos 1, 2 and 3 is advisable so that the child does not grow to feel that "Do" or the "home tone" is necessarily C. It is helpful to explain that the staves were originally one great staff. For convenience the middle line is now omitted and written in for C whenever it occurs.

Step High



2

Fin - gers climb, Keep - ing time, While we sing a mer - ry rhyme.

Soldiers

3

Sol - diers strong Sing a song, As they brave - ly march a - long.

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The Rain

4

Ev - 'ry spring the flow - ers wel - come back their friend the rain;

You can hear it soft - ly tap - ping on the win - dow - pane.

This is the first introduction of the minor mode, descriptive of all that is plaintive, mysterious or fantastic.

It's Easy Coming Down

5

Up - stairs we climb, Then come down in half the time.

The attention here is focussed on the contrast in time values. The teacher will explain that D and E above middle C when written up from the F clef, as in measure 3, stand for the same sounds as when written on the G clef but are to be played with the left hand.

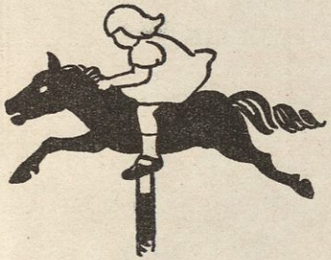
Sailing

6

Mak - ing a boat, Watch-ing it float Off in the sun: Is - n't it fun?

Here we have a musical figure, repeated first in exact repetition and again on a different degree of the scale.

On a Holiday

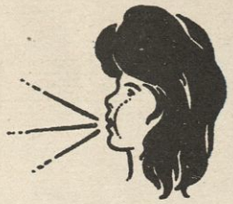


7

Is - n't it fun on the wa - ter to glide, And on the mer - ry - go - round to ride?

The accent alternates from the 2nd to the 3rd finger, and should be marked.

The Wind



8

Hear the wind of win - ter mer - ri - ly blow - ing,

mer - ri - ly blow - ing, Fill - ing all the air with feath - er - y flakes of snow.

The exact repetition makes this simple to memorize, and we have at the end our first major triad built on the first tone of the scale.

Minor

9a *Right hand*

When we hear a wist - ful, plain - tive, lit - tle lay,

Then it is a mi - nor tune, That's why it sounds that way.

This is an illustration of major and minor melodies in the same key.

Major

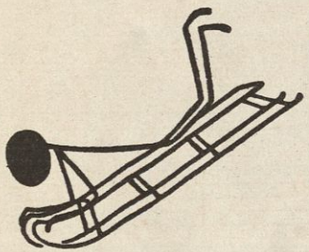
9b

Left hand

But when it sounds bright and mer - ry as can be,

Then it is a ma - jor tune; you'll hear it in - stant - ly.

Sleighing



10

First we give the sled a push un - til it starts to go,

Down the snow - y track we race and soon are far be - low.

Here we have two different figures, one in each hand, and the first use of a ♭ in the signature.

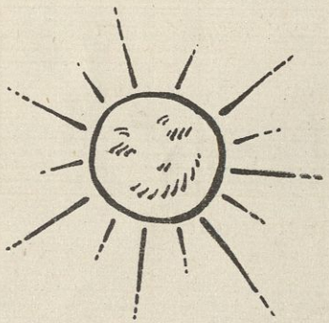
The Cold

11

When we hear the wind blow through the trees,

Lit - tle chil - dren shiv - er and the brooks all freeze.

The accent is thrown on several different fingers and will tend to strengthen the weaker ones.



Hello, Mister Sunshine!

12

Hel - lo, Mis - ter Sun - shine! Won't you please

stay? Scare a - way the rain So we can play.

Call the child's attention to measure 5 and 6 which utilize the melody of measures 1 and 2 inverted.

A Good Plan

13

Play at first so slow - ly that you are at ease;

Lat - er just as quick - ly as ev - er you please. This will make the mel - o - dy

sound like a song, And will give your fin - gers a chance to get strong.

This will require equal practice and agility in the two hands as the figure in the left hand is an exact repetition, inverted, of that in the right.

In the Winter

14

Seeds are sleep-ing 'neath the fall - ing rain, Wait-ing for the spring to come a - gain.

Contains repetition of figure on different degree of scale with dominant and tonic minor chords at the end.

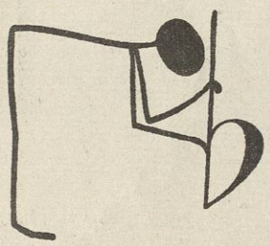
When Do is G

15

You must sharp - ly watch when - ev - er Do is G, Else you will for - get that black F ♯ is Ti.

Whether or not the teacher uses the *tonic, sol, fa* syllables, it still is true that F♯ is the signature when G is the keynote.

When Do is F



16

B is too high, so we play B flat for Fa when Do (or 1) is F.

'Tis - n't so hard to re - mem - ber, 'Tis the same on ei - ther clef.

Whether or not the teacher uses the *tonic, sol, fa* syllables, it still is true that B♭ is the signature when F is the keynote.

The Trouble

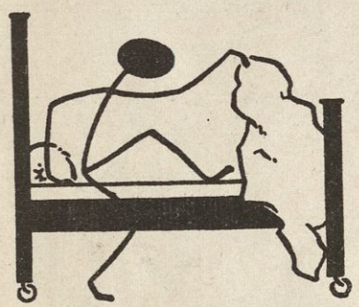
17

John - ny was - n't ver - y well, ver - y well, ver - y well,

John - ny was - n't ver - y well, and he went to bed.

In numbers 17 and 18 we have the color contrast between minor and major. They may be played together without pause.

How Different!



18

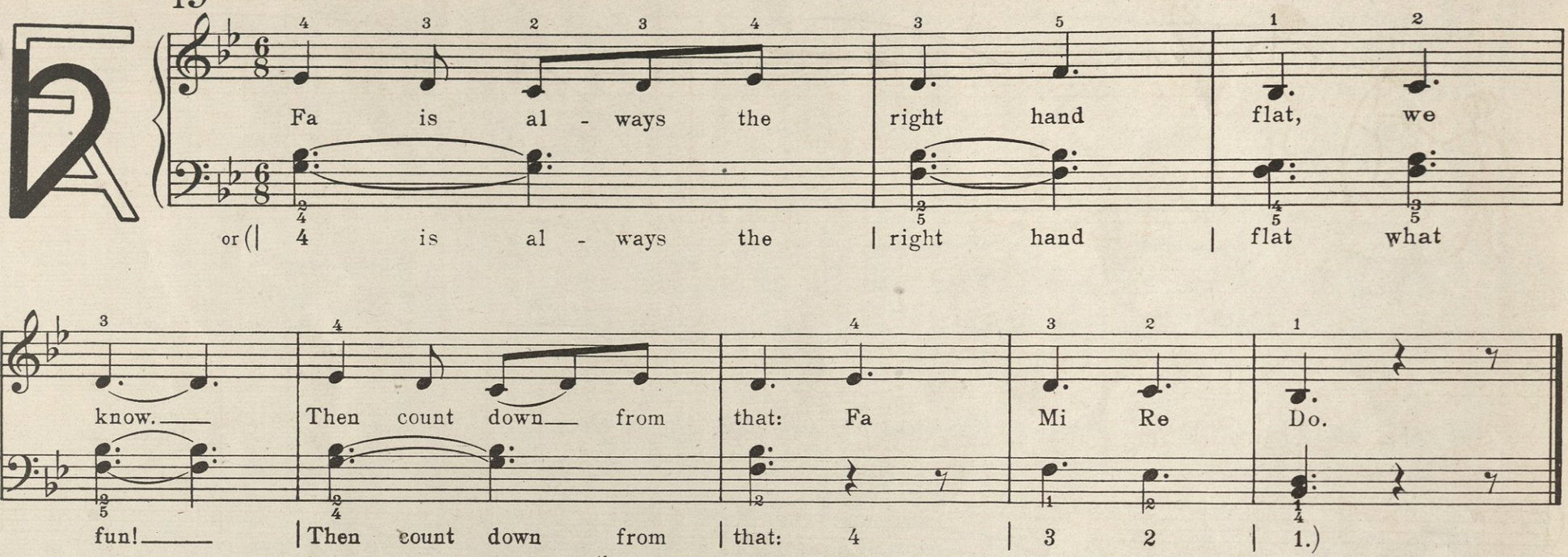
But when he heard the din - ner bell, din - ner bell,

din - ner bell, He de - cid - ed he was well and jump'd out of bed.

How to Find Do

(When there are flats in the signature)

19

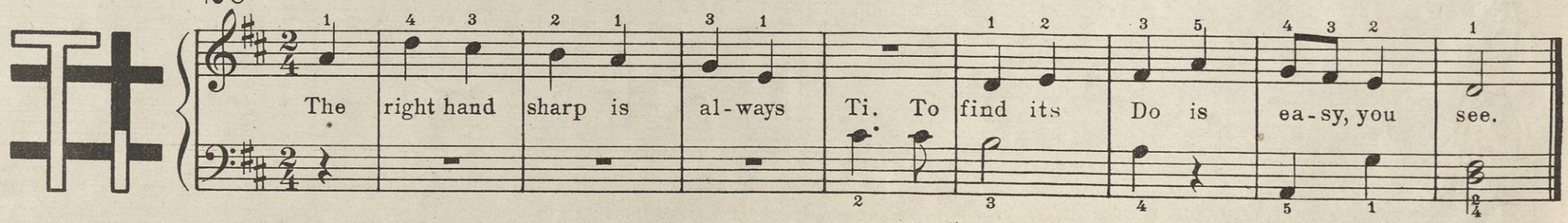

Fa is al - ways the right hand flat, we
or (| 4 is al - ways the | right hand | flat what
know. Then count down from that: Fa Mi Re Do.
fun! | Then count down from | that: 4 | 3 2 | 1.)

As in numbers **15** and **16**, whether the teacher calls the 4th tone of the scale *fa* or *one*, it is always true that the right hand flat is the 4th tone of the scale and the 1st tone is then easily located. 6/8 time is taken up here.

How to Find Do

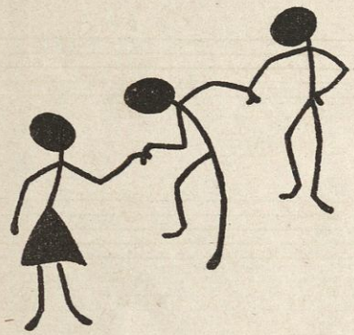
(When there are sharps in the signature)

20



As in the preceding page, we find here that the right hand sharp is always the 7th tone of the scale and by counting up a half-step we find our home tone.

Do's Best Friends



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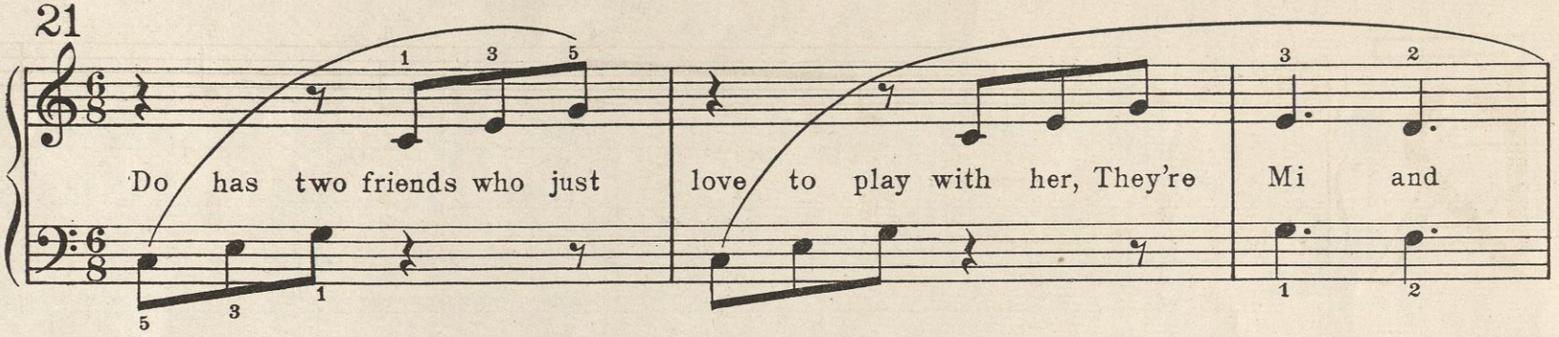
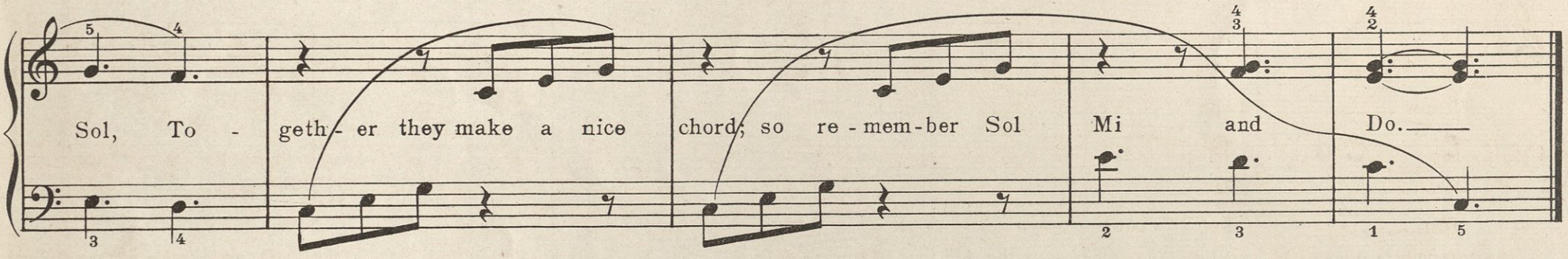
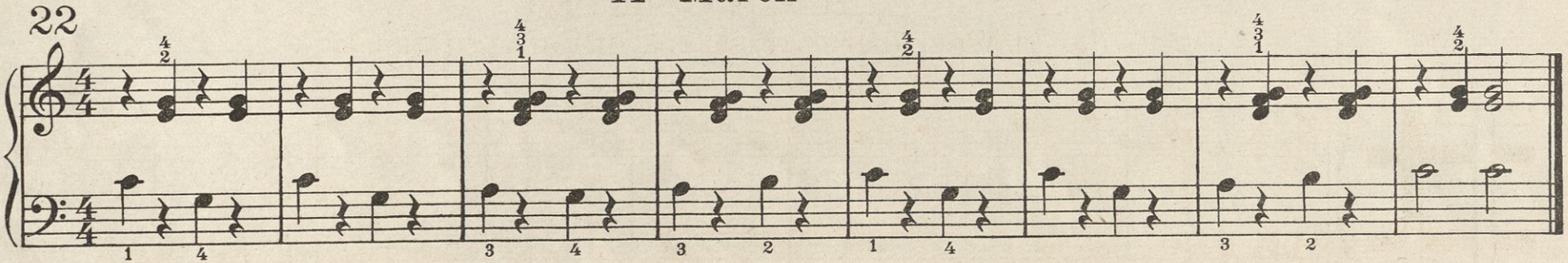




Here we have the tonic triad, broken but complete in each hand, and at the end divided between the two hands.

A March

22



This presents the chords like a bass part in a band and alternates the rests in the two hands. If desired the teacher may make up a melody to play with the child. The rests, alternating hands and rhythm are the things to be dwelt on.

Floating

23

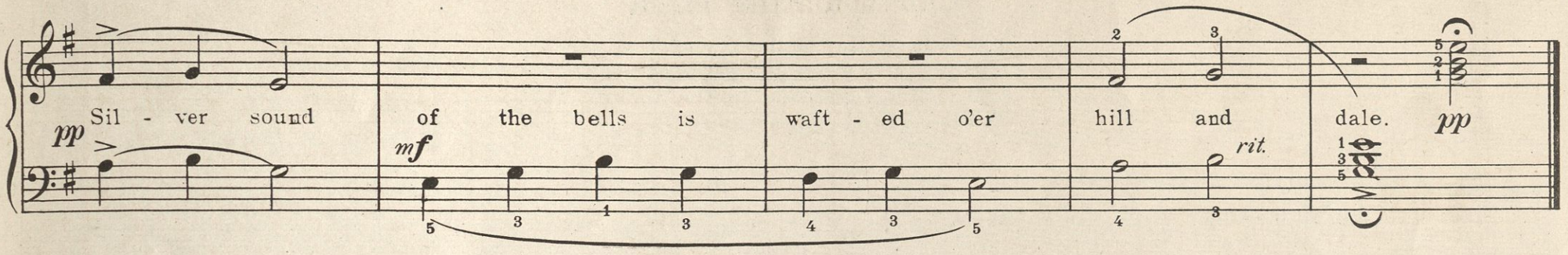
Float - ing, float - ing, Down the qui - et riv - er; Boat - ing, boat - ing in the sum - mer breeze.

The Echoes

24

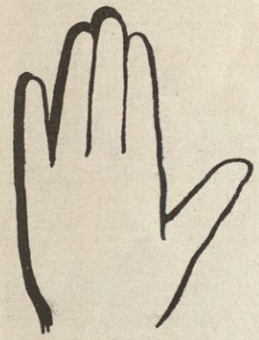
f Hear the ech - oes soft re - bound *p* O'er the ground.

Echoes — if a child has ever heard them — are a good example of *contrast* in *tone-volume* which is the outstanding feature of this little piece.

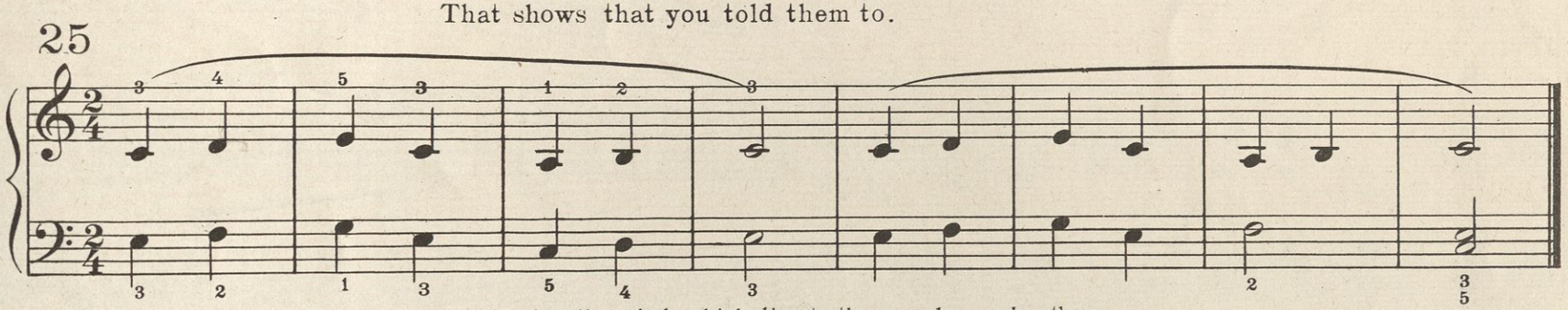


You Be the Teacher

If your hands play *well* for you,
That shows that you told them to.



25

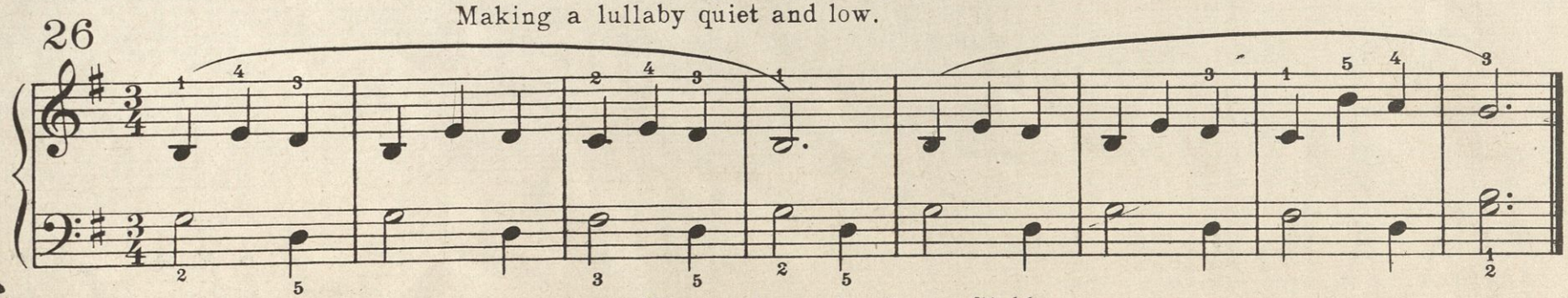


A reminder that the fingers only work when the mind, which directs the muscles, *makes* them.

A Lullaby

B. E. D., B. E. D. spelling we'll go,
Making a lullaby quiet and low.

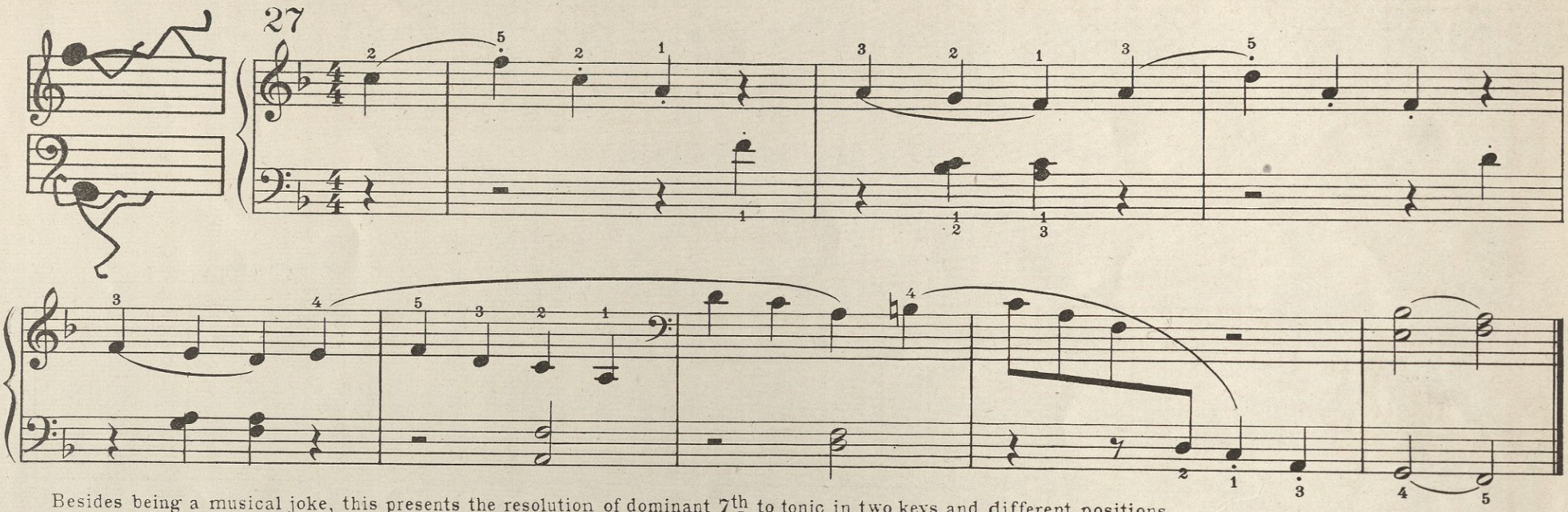
26



Though not always melodic, spelling on the staff is amusing and not unprofitable.

Can You Find Them

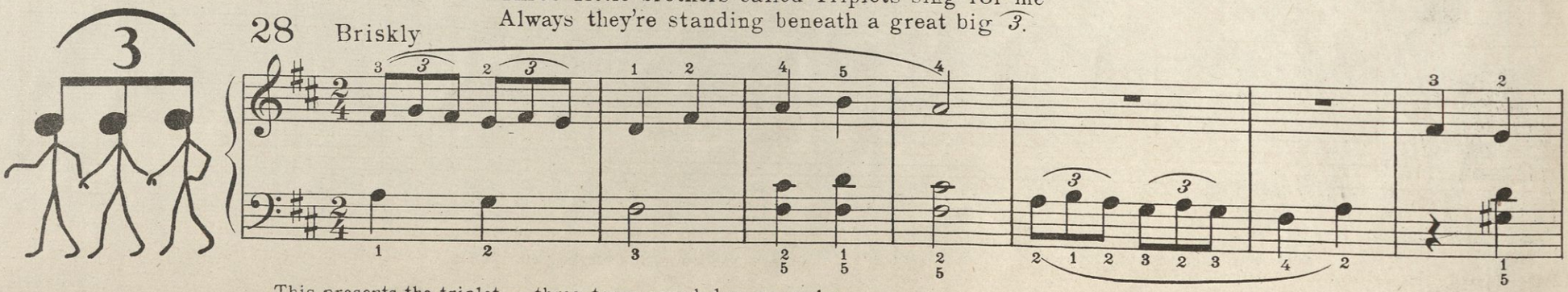
The *topmost* line on the *G* clef is *F;*
And if a joke you would share with me
Just look way down and on the *F* clef,
You'll find the *bottom* line is *G.*



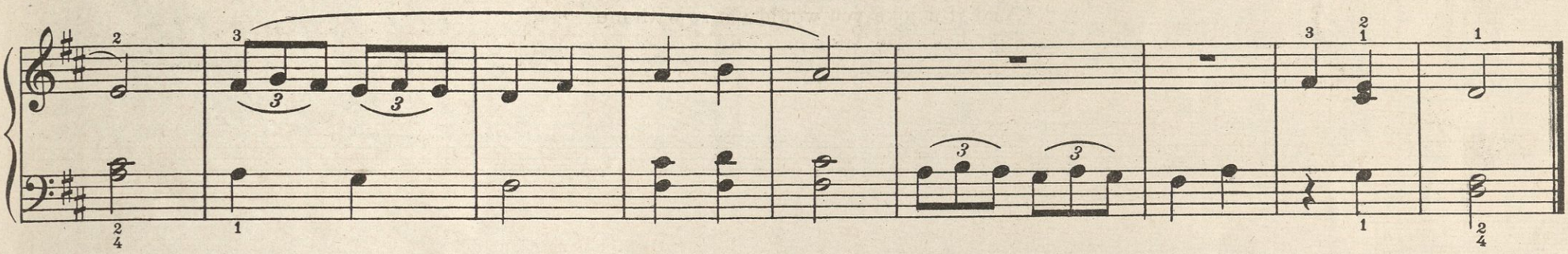
Besides being a musical joke, this presents the resolution of dominant 7th to tonic in two keys and different positions.

Triplets

Three little brothers called Triplets sing for me
Always they're standing beneath a great big *3.*



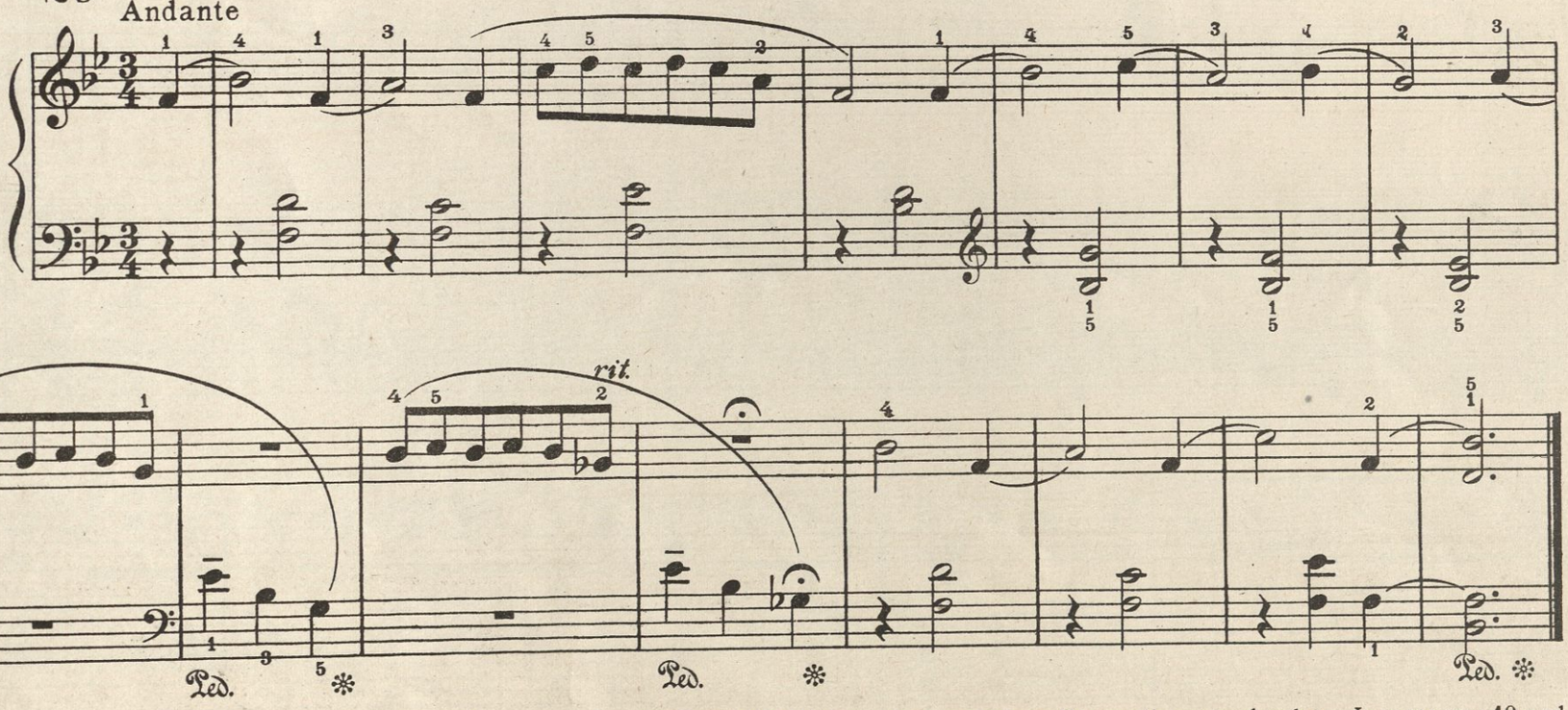
This presents the triplet — three tones sounded on one pulse.



In a Gondola

29

Andante



A study in tone shading. The right hand uses a medium loud, heavy singing tone and the left comes down very softly on the second pulse. In measures 10 and 12 the three tones (a broken chord, first major, then minor,) are allowed to sing together by means of the pedal, put down *just after* the first of the three tones.

The Bugle

30 Con vivo

mf

We have here the chords of C and G in various positions. It should be played with much spirit.

Ped. ✻

On a Quiet Sea

31

Quietly

p

pp

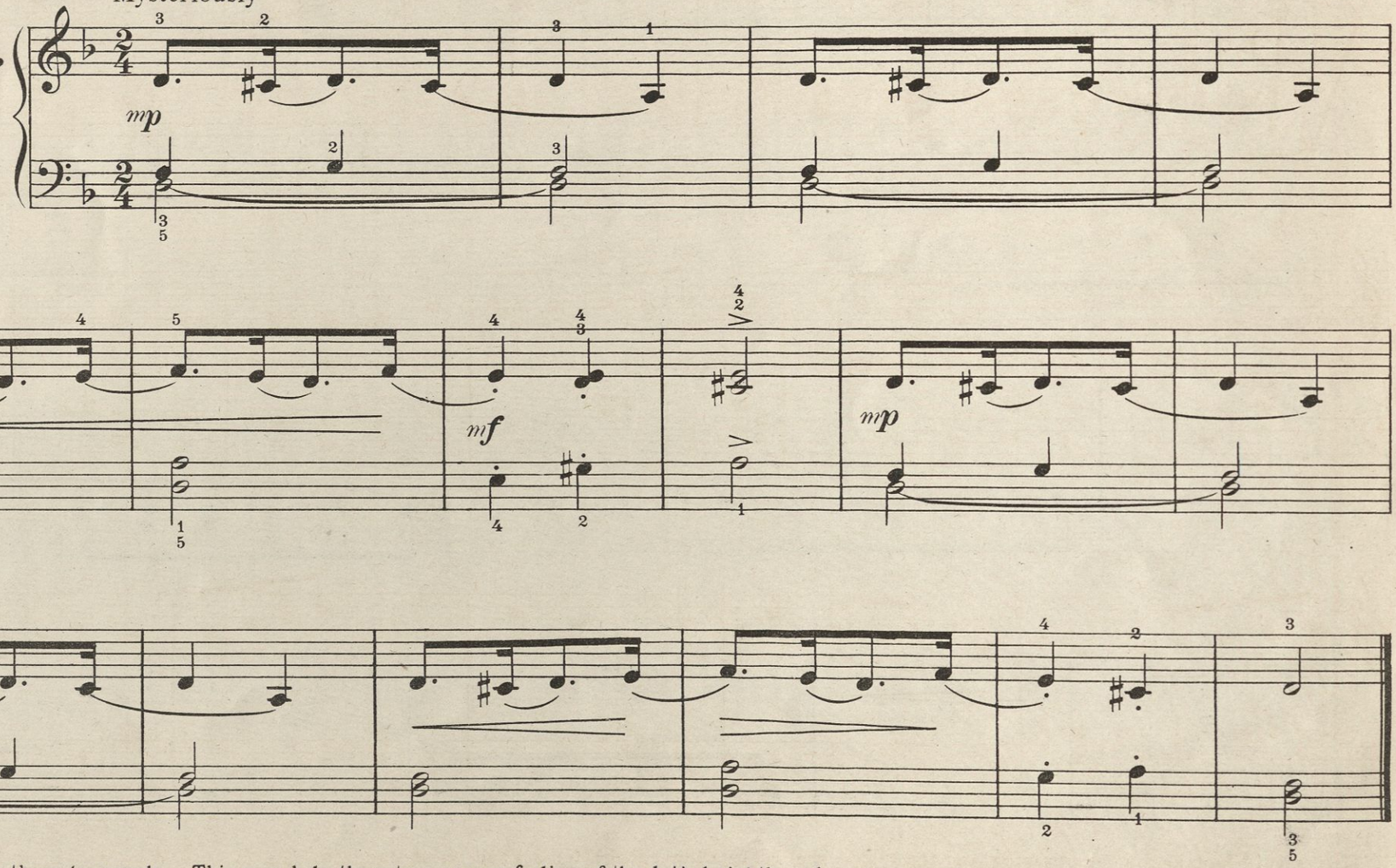
Here we have the singing melody in the bass and a soft accompaniment in the right hand. The pedal need not be employed if care is taken to use a perfect legato. The fingering is so arranged that this will be entirely possible.

The Dots

When a tune is jerky, very, very jerky,
And you think there's some mistake in what you play,
You must never worry, you must never hurry,
'Tis the little dots that make it sound that way.

32

Mysteriously

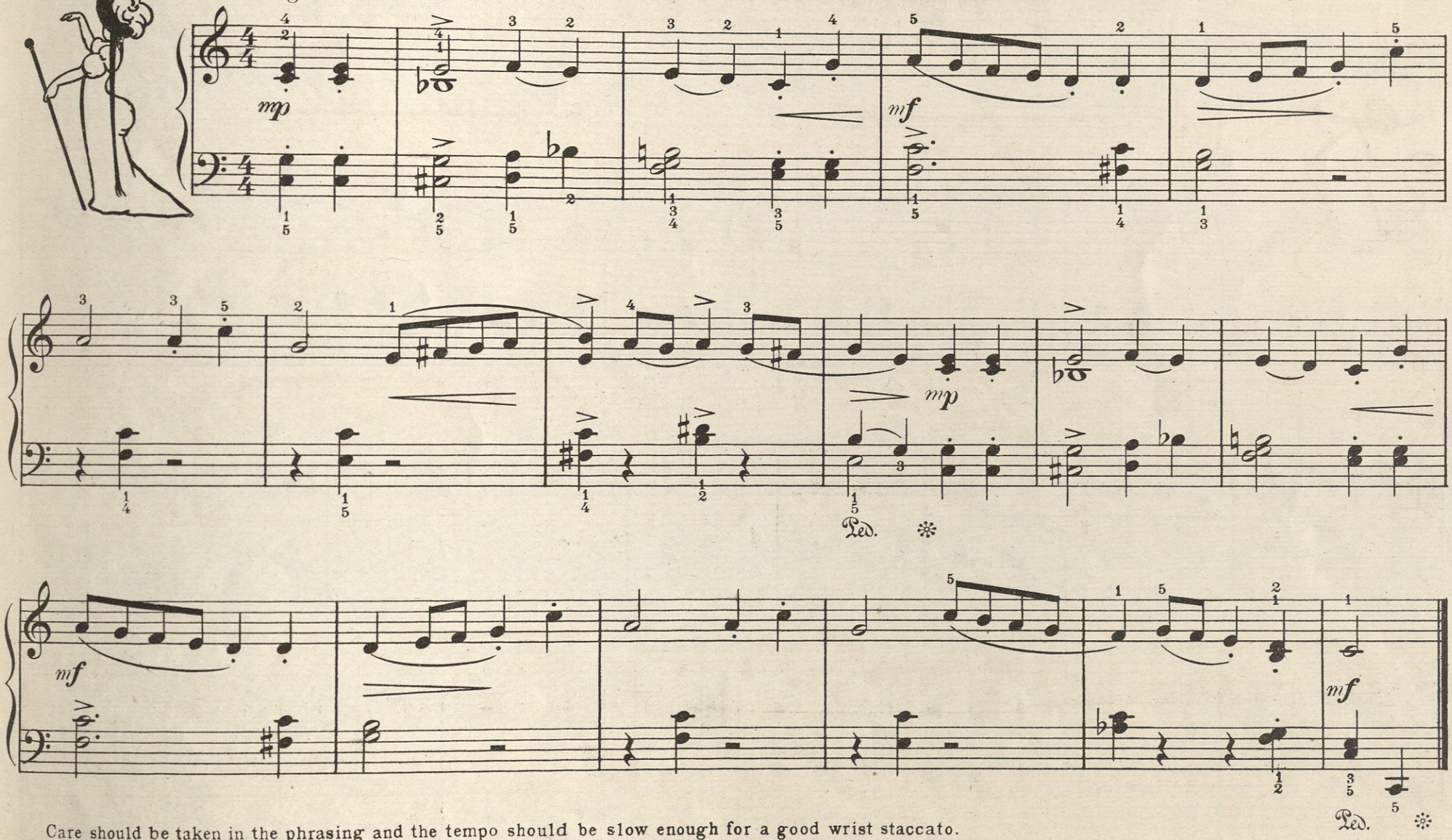


Children usually play these *too* evenly. This may help them to a proper feeling of the dotted-eighth and sixteenth-notes.

Gavotte

33

Allegretto marcato



Care should be taken in the phrasing and the tempo should be slow enough for a good wrist staccato.

At the Party

34 Allegretto grazioso

mp

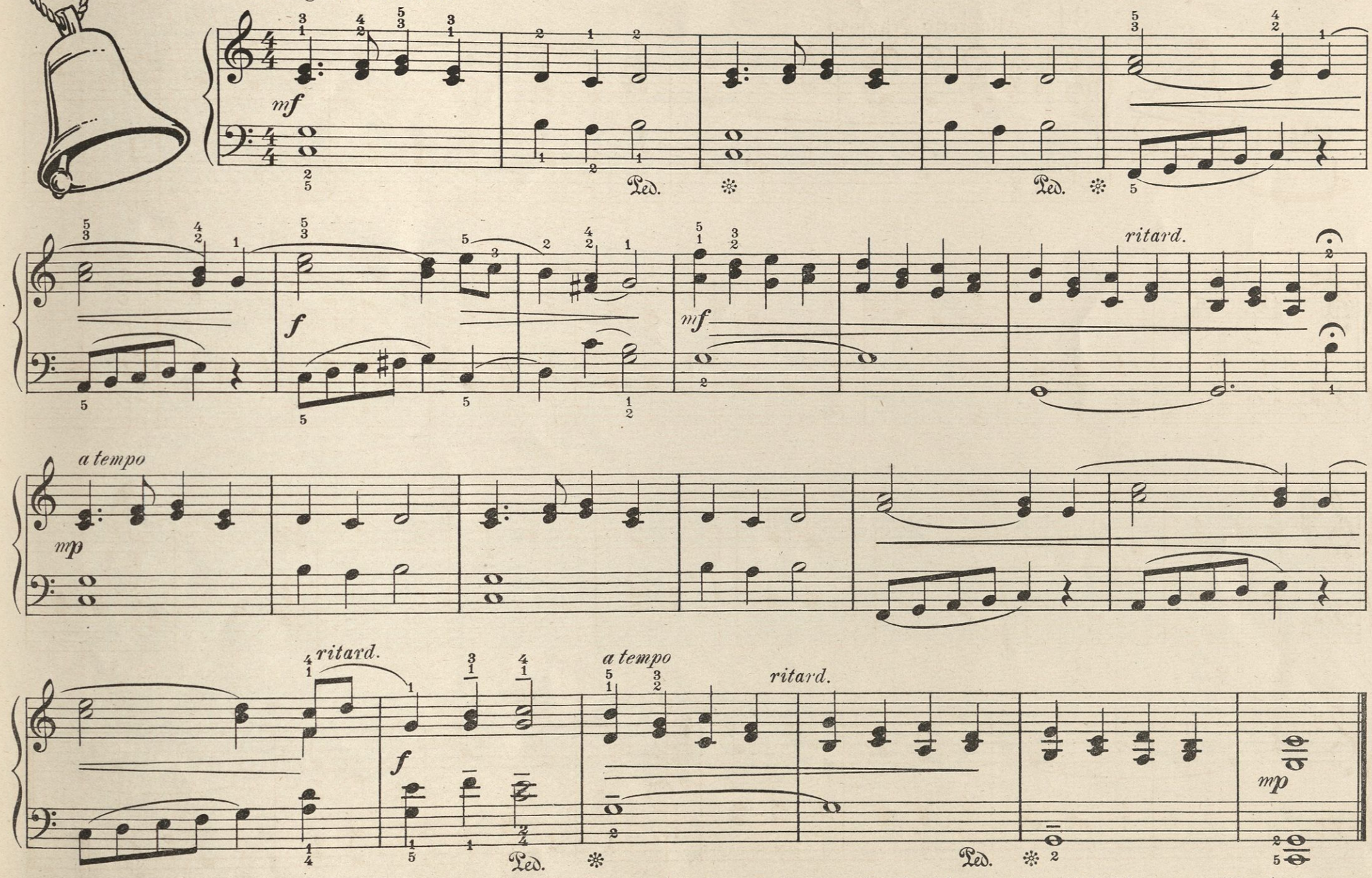
rit. *a tempo*

Ped. ✻

The holding of the bass note while the two chords are being played is the chief difficulty introduced.

35 Christmas Bells

Allegretto animato



This has a little run in the left hand; is good for rhythm, but on account of the figure in the right should not be given to a child with very small hands.

The Doll's Boat-ride

36 Andantino dolce

mp

poco ritard.

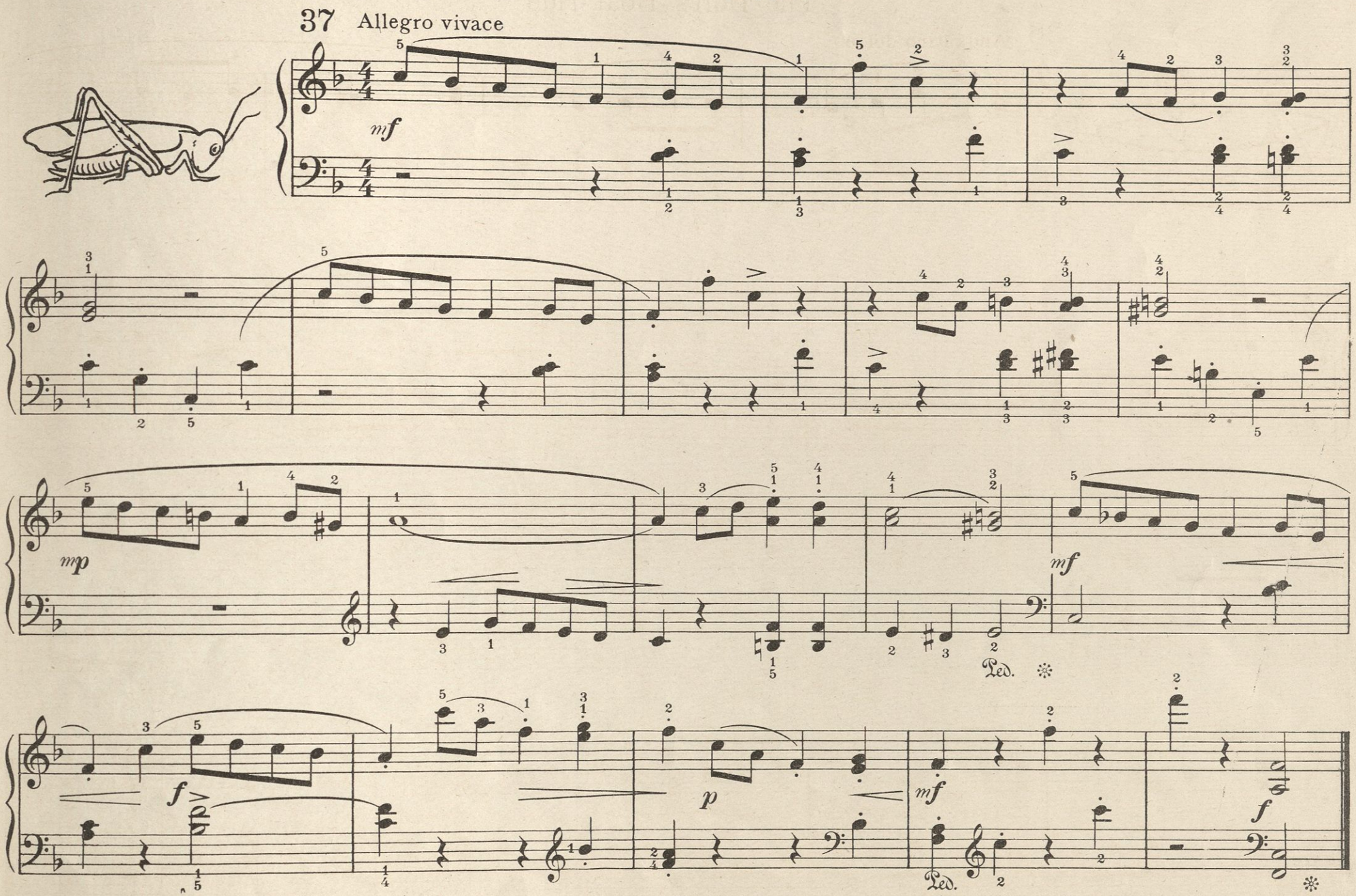
a tempo

morendo

p

Ped. ✲

The Grasshopper


37 Allegro vivace

This should be helpful rhythmically and aid in acquiring a crisp staccato. The hands alternate in the ascending passage at the end, and added lines appear above the staff.

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